

# DAILY BULLETIN

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## IRAQ ELECTIONS BEGIN PROCESS TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, BUSH SAYS

President acknowledges mixed progress for U.S.-trained Iraqi security units

President Bush said Iraq's January 30, 2005, elections are the beginning of a process that will lead to the drafting of a new Iraqi constitution and the election of "a fully democratic constitutional government" by December 2005.

In a December 20 press conference, Bush said more than 80 political parties and coalitions have been formed for the January elections and more than 7,000 candidates have registered to run for the 275-member transitional national assembly and local legislatures.

"The new national assembly will be responsible for drafting a constitution for a free Iraq. By next October the constitution will be submitted to the people for ratification. If it is approved, then by December the voters of Iraq will elect a fully democratic, constitutional government," Bush said.

The president said he did not expect the voting process to be "trouble free," but expressed his confidence in the result. "I'm confident that terrorists will fail, the elections will go forward and Iraq will be a democracy that reflects the values and traditions of its people," he said.

Bush acknowledged that the continuing violence targeting innocent Iraqis is "having an effect."

“[C]ar bombs that destroy young children or car bombs that indiscriminately bomb in religious sites are effective propaganda tools,” but the United States must meet the objective of helping Iraqis defend themselves and move forward on the political process, he said.

The United States will help by increasing troop strength and training Iraqi forces to help provide security. However, Bush said, the results of deploying Iraqi units have been “mixed.” U.S. military leaders in charge of the training have been analyzing “what worked and what didn’t work,” he said. “[T]hey’ve got some generals in place and they’ve got foot soldiers in place, but the whole command structure necessary to have a viable military is not in place,” Bush said.

In response to a question, Bush repeated his desire for U.S. immigration reform that would allow foreign guest workers to enjoy a legal status in the country. “[W]e ought to have a system that recognizes people are coming here to do jobs that Americans will not do,” Bush said.

The president said he wants to legalize guest workers and ease the pressure on their employers, as well as to “cut out the coyotes” who smuggle them across the U.S. border.

Turning to Russia, Bush said he maintains a “good personal relationship” with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the wake of Putin’s decision to appoint governors instead of allowing them to be freely elected, Bush said he had expressed his view that “in a society based upon Western values, we believe in the proper balance of power.”

The president described U.S.-Russian relations as “complex,” with the two countries also sharing intelligence to fight terror and working to secure nuclear materials.

On the subject of the Middle East, President Bush repeated his view that “now is the time to move the [peace] process forward” between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinian elections, scheduled for January 9, 2005, mark “the beginning of the process toward the development of a state,” he said.

Saying he was “realistic” about how to achieve peace, Bush said, “we cannot shortcut the process by saying ... the Palestinians can’t self-govern.” The January 2005

vote “is not the sign that democracy has arrived. It is the beginning of a process,” he said.

Bush said he appreciates the conference British Prime Minister Tony Blair has scheduled with Palestinians in Ramallah on December 22, and said, “if the free world focuses on helping the Palestinians develop a state and there’s leadership willing to accept the help, it’s possible to achieve peace.”

When asked about the legality of the U.S. detentions of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba, President Bush responded that criticisms alleging the United States “is no longer a nation of laws” are unfair.

“[W]e’re now complying with the courts’ decisions,” Bush said. “We want to fully vet the court decision because I believe I have the right to set up military tribunals. And so the law is working to determine what presidential powers are available and what’s not available.”

Bush said the United States is regularly reviewing the status of the Guantanamo detainees and has so far released about 200 prisoners.

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#### INTENSIFIED VIOLENCE IN DARFUR GRAVELY CONCERNS UNITED STATES

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State Department spokesman calls on all sides to respect cease-fire

The United States is “gravely concerned by the intensified violence” that has been recently taking place in the Darfur region of western Sudan and calls on both the Jingoist militias and rebel groups to respect the cease-fire agreement and the terms of the humanitarian and security protocols that have been signed in Abuja, Nigeria.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher made that point in a December 20 statement that was released to the press.

Following is the text of Boucher’s statement:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
December 20, 2004

### United States Condemns Ongoing Violence in Darfur

The United States is gravely concerned by the intensified violence that has been taking place in Darfur in recent days. The operations carried out by the Government and related activity by the Jingaweit militias have caused untold suffering, displacing tens of thousands of people.

At the same time, we want to emphasize that the Darfur rebel groups - the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement - must also respect the cease-fire agreement and the terms of the humanitarian and security protocols that have been signed in Abuja.

Fighting between the Government of Sudan, Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, and Justice and Equality Movement has affected United Nations and other humanitarian relief agencies' operations in South Darfur. We urge both sides in the strongest terms to cooperate fully with international humanitarian efforts.

The United States and the international community, including the United Nations, speak with one voice on the crisis in Darfur. We want particularly to underscore the staunch support of the United States for the efforts of the African Union on Darfur.

We strongly support the statement issued by the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Alpha Oumar Konare, condemning the large-scale violations of the cease-fire committed by all the parties. We will continue to support the accelerated deployment of the African Union mission and the exercise of its expanded mandate. We also welcome and support the African Union's continued leadership in brokering negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur rebel groups, and see this as vital to ending the conflict.

### MINE ACTION INFORMATION CENTER ISSUES NEW EDITION OF "SMART BOOK"

Publication serves as ready reference on mitigating landmine threat

The following statement, issued December 17 by the State Department's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, announces the publication of the second edition of "The Landmine Action Smart Book" published by the Mine Action Information Center of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
December 17, 2004

### MEDIA NOTE

New "Landmine Action Smart Book" Educates Public About Global Landmine Problem

The Mine Action Information Center at James Madison University has released the second edition of "The Landmine Action Smart Book," a primer and reference tool on the humanitarian threat posed by persistent landmines and unexploded ordnance around the world. Publication of the Smart Book, which is designed for the general public, students and the media, was funded by the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement.

The well-illustrated 42-page Smart Book describes the global landmine threat, the nature of landmines, and the main pillars of humanitarian mine action: humanitarian demining, mine risk education for populations in mine affected areas, and landmine survivors assistance. It also provides information on the two international landmine treaties - the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to which the United States is a State Party, and the "Ottawa Convention." In addition, the Smart Book examines research and development to increase the efficiency, speed and safety of humanitarian demining, including such cutting-edge technologies as the U.S.-developed "HSTAMiDS" mine detector that combines ground-penetrating radar with a metal detector, as well as explosive-detecting bacteria, bees and giant African pouch rats that may eventually augment the deminer's "toolbox."

“The Landmine Action Smart Book” will soon be available on-line at <http://maic.jmu.edu/researchtools.htm>.

A limited number of printed editions are also available from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement. To receive a free copy, send an email request to [GrayVC2@state.gov](mailto:GrayVC2@state.gov).

The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs currently manages humanitarian mine action programs in 31 countries around the world, encourages public-private partnerships to support mine action, and also oversees efforts to reduce illegal trafficking and increase international safeguarding of small arms, light weapons and shoulder-fired surface-to-air-missiles. To learn more, visit <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra>.

#### U.S., INTERNATIONAL DANGEROUS GOODS TRANSPORT RULES ALIGNED

Change intended to facilitate international commerce, transport agency says

Washington -- A final rule intended to align U.S. requirements for the transport of hazardous materials (hazmat) with international standards was adopted by the Department of Transportation December 20.

The department said the changes are needed to “facilitate the transport of hazardous materials in international commerce.”

The revisions, which take effect January 1, 2005, incorporate into domestic U.S. transport regulations recent amendments to the International Maritime Organization’s Dangerous Goods Code, the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO’s) Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air and the U.N. Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

The final rule amends the U.S. hazardous materials table, which lists proper shipping names, hazard classes and packaging requirements for hazmat; revises the list of marine pollutants; adds a “KEEP AWAY FROM HEAT” marking requirement for some materials shipped by air;

changes the criteria for classifying materials as corrosive to metal; and revises the packaging requirements for organic peroxides (carbon-containing compounds that pose severe fire and explosion hazards).

In the preamble to the rulemaking, the agency also listed several international requirements not incorporated in the December 20 rule. Some provisions, such as those dealing with infectious substances and compressed gas cylinders, are being addressed in separate rules, according to the agency. Others, most notably a provision in the ICAO instructions that allows shipment of protective breathing equipment with oxygen generators in passenger aircraft, are being rejected by the United States.

Oxygen generators are believed to have triggered a hull fire that caused the 1996 crash of ValuJet Flight 592 into the Florida Everglades. The crash killed all 110 people aboard the Miami-to-Atlanta flight.

The transportation agency said it was rejecting that ICAO change because “we do not believe the amendment to be in the interest of public safety.”

In the preamble, the agency also said that its goal is to “maintain consistency” between domestic and international transport requirements. The intent is not to make U.S. rules identical with international standards, but rather “to remove or avoid potential barriers to international transport.”

Transporters operating in the United States have until January 1, 2006, to comply with the new standards, but compliance is authorized as of January 1, 2005.